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WAY EDUCATION.

AN ESSAY

READ BEFORE THE R. R. Y. M. C. A. OF KANSAS  
CITY, MO., FEB. 15, 1881,

—BY—

J. R. HARDY,

General Agent K. C., St. J., & C. B. R. R.

CHICAGO:  
THE J. M. W. JONES STATIONERY AND PRINTING CO.  
1881.





# RAILWAY EDUCATION.

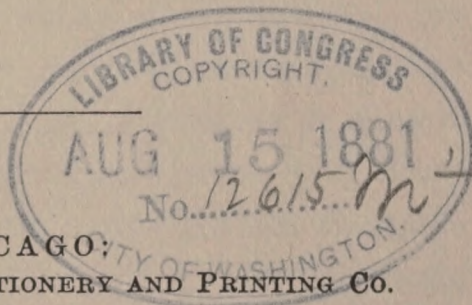
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## RAILWAY EDUCATION.

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My FRIENDS:—At the request of your President I have the pleasure and gratification of addressing you, the railroad men of Kansas City.

No business affords a better school for practical education than yours. By the labor that you perform is carried out a system of comprehensive transportation that stands unrivaled in the history of the world. By your faithful working in the several departments of the railroad service, a safe, speedy, and pleasant means of transportation is afforded to every passenger and at a cheap price for such service. By it, also, every kind of freight—the mineral in the pit or manufactured by the moulder or mechanic; the coal from the mine or the coke from the furnace; the stone from the quarry or dressed by the mason; the timber in the log or from the workshop of the artizan; the grain from the farm or the grist and flour from the mill; the fruit of the earth in its ripeness or canned from the factory; the cotton in its native state from the plantations of the South or woven from the mills of the East; the live stock, the cattle, sheep and hogs,



or the hides, wool, packed meats and lard—in short, everything that is eaten, or drank, or smoked, or worn, or that enters, however slightly, into the world of service, passes through your hands to its destination. You are the custodians of wealth untold, and to your care is committed the lives of countless thousands.

Foremost among the principles of practical education stand system and discipline. Without system no headway would be made, no order would be possible, and what a bable of confusion our work would be ! We breathe the inspiration of system from the Creator of the universe. The earth revolves and gives us regularly day and night ; we have a regular system of seasons, from which the farmer takes his lessons of sowing and reaping. By a complete system all the minutiae of railroad business is regulated, from the construction of the line to the carrying of the business ; the making of time-cards and rules governing the same ; the classification of the different kinds of freight and the proper charge for each ; the receipt and payment of moneys. In the carrying out of this system, discipline is pre-eminent. System dictates the way, discipline executes. “ Tell me what you want done,” says Discipline to System, “ and I will go to work and do it.” Discipline marshals the mechanical



force, places every man at his post, and points out to him his duty, and let us all remember the excellence of the proverb: "He is not fit to command who has not first learned to obey."

You occupy positions of great responsibility. Yes, there is a grave responsibility resting upon every man connected with the railroad service, from the President of the company, who represents the owners of the property, to the poorest watchman, who stands flag in hand at some public road crossing, and who, though his pay is small and his labor light, protects the public and the trains from accident. The *great responsibility* with you is that you shall carry out your instructions. A few years ago, on one of the railroads running to Kansas City, there was a regulation requiring conductors of passenger trains to personally throw switches at points of meeting with other trains. This order was not lived up to, and one night a brakeman, a new man on the road, doing this work for his conductor, got confused, and after he had thrown the switch rightly he threw it back, and brought about a collision between two passenger trains, and the conductor of the meeting train—a veteran in the service, and one of the noblest of men—lost his life. The conductor who had failed to carry



out his orders lost his situation. But what mattered that to the dead conductor.

The failure of the conductor and engineer to comply with their train orders would result disastrously to life and property, as would the neglect of the operator to carry out the orders of the dispatcher, which was the case a few years ago on a Canadian railroad, whereby a collision of passenger trains occurred, and over a score of men and women were scalded to death. Or the section man who removes a rail from the track and neglects to protect the break by proper signals, jeopardizes the lives of people totally unconscious of danger as they are carried swiftly forward on the express train. The careless passing of the rolling stock by the inspector is a very dangerous thing, quite likely to result in disaster; and the wrong selling of a ticket, or the wrong checking of the baggage, the wrong billing of the freight by the bill clerk, or the wrong loading by the warehouseman, or the wrong switching of the car by the yardmen, will cause a world of disappointment, delay and expense.

And yet this very thing of responsibility is the best feature in your practical education. Every man has his own responsibility. Every man is expected to do



his duty. Every man can demonstrate that he is a man among men. Thus may each member of this vast army of railroad men of these United States say "I carry upon *my* shoulders the responsibility accompanying my position, and I will be faithful to my trust." The poorest man in the service can carry just as much responsibility as the richest, for responsibility not being wholly measured by money or position, is faithfully served by that composition which God has implanted in every sane human being, no matter whether he be rich or poor—no matter whether he rides in the director's car or labors on the section.

And this is in accordance with the nature of the institutions of our country. As there is no position in the gift of the people to which a born citizen of the United States may not aspire, so there is no position in the length and breadth of your profession that you may not reach. It is within the grasp of every railroad employe, no matter how humble his position, by his own exertions and conduct, to rise to even the highest, and from the responsibility of carrying out instructions received, be called to the responsibility of issuing instructions. We have not to look far for proof of this. The General Manager of a Western line, and the Superintendent of another,



running to Kansas City, some twenty years ago were telegraph operators at small local stations ; the General Manager of another line, and the General Superintendent yet of another, also running to Kansas City, less than twenty years ago were brakemen ; and three Division Superintendents of other railways running to Kansas City, but a few years ago were conductors of trains. All these men were disciples of practical education, and faithful to their trusts.

The influences of your profession are elevating. The railroad is a public benefactor. See the waste places that have sprung into life and activity with the march of the Iron Horse. Hear the ringing of the anvil and the buzz of machinery, and see the busy hive of men working in these new-made cities, all called into active being by the railroad ! Witness the civilizing influence of these bands of iron, which have connected the shores of the Atlantic with those of the Pacific, the Gulf with the Lakes ; which have traversed the crowded cities and States of the East, crossed the mighty rivers, spread over the "boundless prairies," braved the dangers of the cannon, and scaled the steep mountains ; which have carried the men of capital and brains and energy into every portion of our country, and done so much to abolish old party



lines—to make this glorious land no East, no West, no North, no South, but the mighty United States forever !

Sometimes an angry or disappointed man cries out that railroad corporations have no souls. He forgets, or heeds not, the great service railroad companies render annually in the name of that greatest of virtue, “Charity.”

True, there is a large portion of the business in the operating department hazardous, and attended with considerable danger ; yet how often do the facts prove that the party receiving personal injuries openly violated the very instructions framed especially for his protection ? We can all name prominent surgeons, eminent in their profession, retained on the pay rolls by the railroad companies to administer to the necessities of wounded railroad employes, *free*. We are familiar with many reading rooms and libraries maintained in excellent condition by railroad companies and placed at the disposal of the employes ; and here I want to accord the full meed of praise to the railroad company at Topeka for the generous gift of \$25,000 for the establishment of a similar institution recently, and the very room we are now assembled in, with its facilities for cleanliness, amuse-



ment and instruction, is a boon to you from the railroad companies. You have within your reach ample facilities for the personal possession of that treasure so beautifully described by the poet in the following lines :

“ Long on Golconda’s shore a diamond lay,  
Neglected, rough, concealed in common clay.  
By every passenger despised and scorned,  
The latent jewel thus in secret mourned,—  
‘ Why am I thus to sordid earth confined?  
Why scorned and trod upon by every hind?  
Were these bright qualities, this glittering hue,  
And dazzling lustre never meant for view?  
Wrapt in eternal shade if I remain,  
These shining virtues were bestowed in vain.’

As thus the long-neglected gem displayed  
Its worth and wrong, a skillful artist strayed  
By chance that way, and saw with curious eye,  
Tho’ much obscured, the valued treasure lie.  
He ground with care, and polished it with art,  
And called forth all its rays from every part.  
And now young Delia’s neck ordained to grace,  
It adds new charms to beauty’s fairest face,  
The mind of man, neglected and untaught,  
Is this rough diamond in the mind unwrought.  
’Till education lend her aid, unknown  
The brightest talents lie, a common stone ;  
By her fair hands fashioned, the new mind  
Rises with lustre, polished and refined.”

You labor in a city of prominent standing in the world for energy, brains and enterprise—only a few years ago a place of hills, and holes, and inactivity,



but now a lasting monument of strength and beauty to the men of your profession, and with the further development of the country, in its march of civilization and improvement, the practical men of your calling will surely rise ; but it will not be the sluggard that will come to the front ; it will not be the careless, indifferent man, who cares for nothing but quitting-time and pay-day, that will rise. It will be the earnest worker, the man who takes as much interest and pride in his business as though it were his own property that he was handling ; it will be the disciple of practical education, who has performed his labor faithfully, stood his responsibility manfully, and demonstrated his own worthiness.

And now I say to you, railroad men of Kansas City, educate yourselves in your profession. Place the red signal of danger before the vice of *drunkenness*, and its twin brother of disaster, *gambling*. Be patient in your labor and faithful to your trust. Thus shall you be fortified with practical knowledge, and strengthened with resolution,—respected by the community and honored by your employers,—and you will surely rise.







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